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Statistics Canada

1996 Census

Marital Status, Common-Law Unions and
Families
Immigration and Citizenship

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MARITAL STATUS, COMMON-LAW UNIONS AND FAMILIES

HIGHLIGHTS

- Data from the 1996 Census show further changes in the makeup of Canadian families. Common-law and lone-parent families together now constitute over one-quarter of all families in Canada, although married couple families are still the large majority.
- Almost one in every five children in Canada lived with a lone parent.
- More than 2.6 million people lived alone in 1996, about 12% of the population aged 15 and over. Seniors accounted for more than a third of people who lived alone, and most of them were widows.

Statistics Canada today releases data on marital status, common-law unions and families from the 1996 Census, the third of 11 announcements that are painting a new statistical portrait of the nation. This release describes how our families are changing and where children fit into the evolving family structures.

The data, collected on May 14, 1996, show further changes in the makeup of Canadian families during the past five years. In 1996, common-law and lone-parent families together made up over one-quarter (26%) of all families in Canada, compared to a fifth (20%) a decade ago. Between 1991 and 1996, the number of lone-parent families increased 19%, compared to 28% for common-law families and 1.7% for married couple families.

Married couple families still constituted the large majority of families. Since 1986, the proportion has declined from 80% of all families to 74%, due to substantial increases in both common-law and lone-parent families.

Between 1991 and 1996 the rate of increase in common-law families was about 16 times that for married couple families.

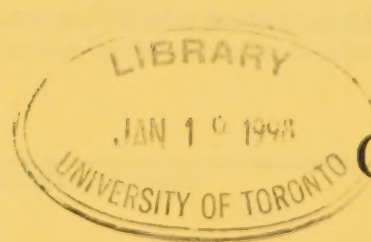
As of the 1996 Census, there were 1.1 million lone-parent families. Since 1991, they have increased at four times the rate

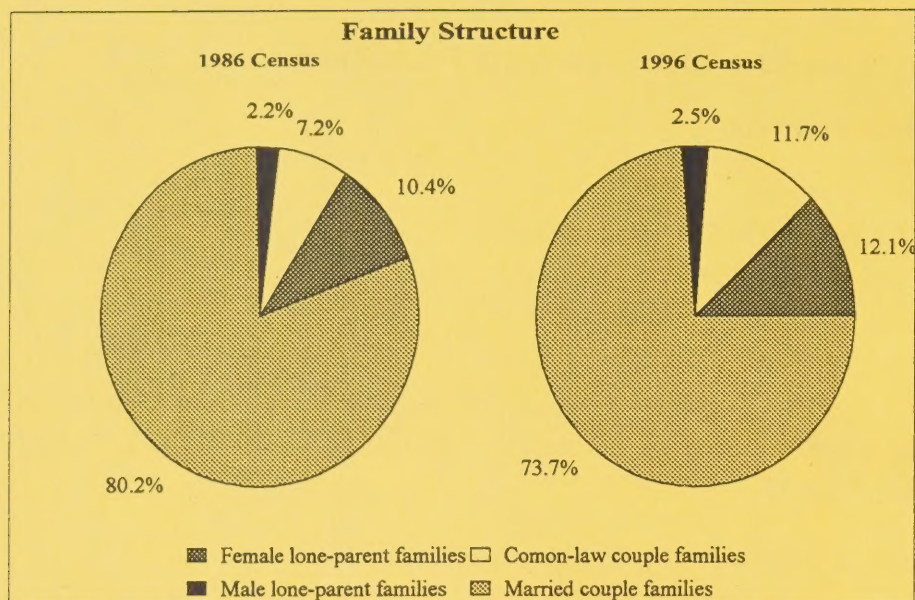
of husband-wife families. Lone-parent families headed by women continued to outnumber those headed by men by more than four to one.

Between 1991 and 1996, the number of children living in families increased 6.3%. There was almost no increase in children living in families of married couples, in contrast to strong growth among children who lived with common-law couples (+52%) and lone parents (+19%). Almost one in every five children in Canada lived with a lone parent in 1996.

Overall, the total number of families in Canada increased 6.6% to 7.8 million between 1991 and 1996. This was a more moderate pace than the growth rate of 9.2% in the previous five-year period. This slower growth was the result of people waiting longer to either marry or enter a common-law union. In addition, there was a higher proportion of separated, divorced or widowed individuals who were not living as part of a couple at the time of the Census.

The proportion of the population living in families, which had been declining since 1971 when it was 89%, remained stable between 1991 and 1996 (84%). Since the 1986 Census, the average family size has remained at 3.1 persons. In 1971, by comparison, it was 3.7 persons.





Families: growth strongest among common-law couple families

Of all family structures, growth was strongest among common-law couple families. In 1996, 920,635 such families were counted, up 28% from 1991. (The Census defines common-law partners as two persons of opposite sex who are not legally married to each other, but live together as husband and wife in the same dwelling.)

In 1996, one couple in seven in Canada was living common-law, compared to about one in nine in 1991. The marital status of individuals in common-law unions remained almost the same between 1991 and 1996: nearly two-thirds of them were single, while over a quarter were divorced.

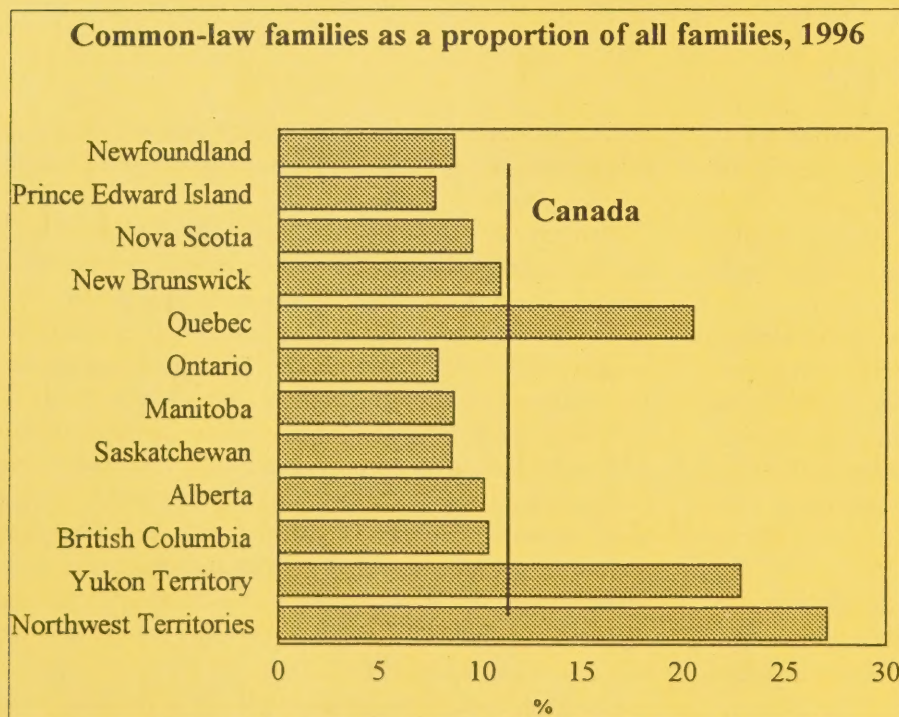
Almost half of the common-law couple families included children, whether born to the current union or brought to the family from previous unions.

Common-law families were by far most frequent in Quebec, which had 400,265, or 43% of all such families in Canada. One couple in four (24%) in Quebec lived common law.

More than 1 million lone-parent families

In 1996, 14.5% of all families were lone-parent families compared to 13% in 1991. The number of lone parent families reached 1,138,000, up 19% from 1991 and 33% from 1986.

Those headed by women increased at a slightly faster pace (+20%) than those headed by men (+16%) between 1991 and 1996. This increase among female lone parents could have significant



implications in terms of family incomes, since female lone parents have a high incidence of low income.

The proportion of lone parents who had never been married increased from 14% in 1986 to 17% in 1991 and 22% in 1996. Nearly one-quarter (24%) of all female lone parents were single in 1996.

About a third of lone parents were divorced in all three census years, while roughly a fifth were separated. The proportion of widows and widowers declined from 27% in 1986 to 23% in 1991 and 20% in 1996.

Families in private households with and without children at home, 1991 and 1996

	1991		1996		1991-1996
	Number of families	% of total	Number of families	% of total	% change
Total Families	7,355,725	100.0	7,837,865	100.0	6.6
Husband-wife families	6,402,090	87.0	6,700,355	85.5	4.7
with children at home	3,830,265	52.1	3,970,580	50.7	3.7
without children at home	2,571,825	35.0	2,729,775	34.8	6.1
Married-couple families	5,682,815	77.3	5,779,720	73.7	1.7
with children at home	3,534,740	48.1	3,535,630	45.1	0.0
without children at home	2,148,070	29.2	2,244,085	28.6	4.5
Common-law families	719,275	9.8	920,635	11.7	28.0
with children at home	295,525	4.0	434,950	5.5	47.2
without children at home	423,750	5.8	485,690	6.2	14.6
Lone-parent families	953,640	13.0	1,137,505	14.5	19.3
Male	165,240	2.2	192,275	2.5	16.4
Female	788,395	10.7	945,235	12.1	19.9

During the 1950s and 1960s, a spouse's death was the major cause of lone parenthood. More than 60% of all lone parents were widows or widowers. However, in 1996 that proportion had dropped to 20%, as divorce, separation, and births outside marriage have become the dominant factors of lone parenthood.

Married couple families: only a slight increase

In 1996, there were 5.8 million married couple families in Canada, an increase of only 1.7% from 1991. The proportion of married couple families fell in every province and territory. In Newfoundland, 78% of all families were married couple families in 1996, the highest

proportion in Canada. This was down from 82% in 1991 and 85% a decade ago. Quebec had the lowest proportion of married couple families among the provinces, 64%, compared to 70% in 1991. In 1996, this was about 10 points below the national average.

Majority of families had at least one child at home

The majority of families in Canada, about 65%, still had at least one child living at home in 1996, unchanged from 1991. (For the purposes of the Census, a child is defined as a son or daughter who is living at home and has never been married, regardless of age.)

The number of married couple families with children at home remained stable at 3.5 million between 1991 and 1996.

In 1996, there were 434,950 common-law couples with children at home, up a substantial 47% from 1991. The rate of increase was just over three times as high as that for common-law couples without children at home.

Among the provinces, the strongest growth in common-law families with children occurred in Quebec, where they increased 59% to 209,230, almost half the national total.

Although the census does not collect such information, many married and common-law couples have children from previous marital or common-law unions. The General Social Survey showed, for example, that in 1995, 10% of couple families with children were step families. Of those, slightly over half consisted of couples who were currently married, while the remainder were common-law couples.

Children: most still lived in married couple families

About 9.4 million children lived in families in 1996, a 6.3% increase from 1991. The changing look of Canada's families was reflected in the distribution of children living in the three family structures (married couples, common-law and lone-parent). In 1991, almost 78 children out of 100 lived in families of married couples. Five years later, this proportion had dropped to about 73 out of every 100 while the proportion of children living in common-law families and in lone-parent families increased.

Substantially more children in common-law couple families

In 1996, 735,565 children were living in common-law couple families, a substantial 52% increase from 1991.

Nationally, 14% of all children under the age of six were living in common-law couple families. In Quebec, by comparison, 31% of all children in this age group were in common-law couple families.

Every province and territory recorded substantial increases among children living with common-law couples. In Quebec, 343,050 children lived in families of common-law couples in 1996, up 69% from 1991, the biggest increase among the provinces.

One in every five children lived in lone-parent families

Almost one in every five children in Canada lived with a lone parent in 1996, compared to one in six in 1991.

Between 1991 and 1996, the number of children living with a lone parent increased 19% to just under 1.8 million. Four out of every five (84%) lived with a female lone parent.

The number of children living with a female lone parent increased at a much faster pace (+20%) than did those living with a male lone parent (+11%).

Marital status: marriage losing its appeal, common law more popular

The 1996 Census showed that the proportion of the Canadian population living in a couple was declining. In 1996, 59% of all individuals aged 15 and over reported that they were either married or living in a common-law union, down from 61% in 1991. This decrease was due to the decline in the proportion of people living in married couples, from 54% in 1991 to 51% in 1996. Although a higher proportion reported that they were living in a common-law union (8% in 1996 compared to 7% in 1991), this increase did not compensate for the decrease in the proportion of people living in married couples.

Single people were either waiting longer to get married or preferring to live in a common-law union, according to the Census. In 1996, 89% of people aged 20 to 24 had never been married, compared to 85% in 1991. In 1971, only 56% of people in this age group were single.

There was also a substantial increase in the proportion of single people among individuals aged 25 to 29. In 1996, 59% of people in that age group had never been married, compared to 50% in 1991 and 21% in 1971.

A larger proportion of single people have chosen to live in a common-law union as an alternative to marriage. In 1996, 16% of the people never married were living in a common-law union, up from 14% in 1991.

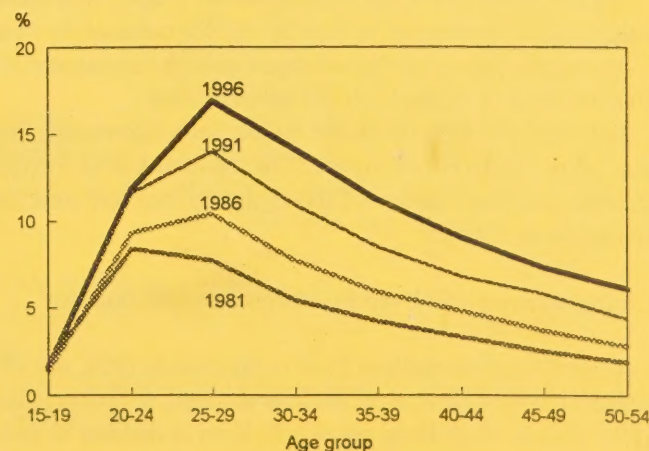
While common-law unions had traditionally been more prevalent among people in their early 20s, they have become more popular among older individuals as well.

In 1981, common-law unions were most prevalent among people aged 20 to 24. Since 1986, they have been most prevalent among those aged 25 to 29. In 1996, one out of every six Canadians aged 25 to 29 (17%) lived in a common-law union. This upward shift likely occurred because young adults tend to stay longer in such unions, as confirmed by Statistics Canada's 1995 General Social Survey.

Marital status of people 15 years and over, by age group, 1971, 1991, 1996

		Total	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-49	50-64	65 and over
		%						
Single	1971	28.3	95.5	55.5	20.6	9.1	9.0	10.6
	1991	30.7	99.0	84.6	50.3	17.0	6.7	8.4
	1996	32.2	99.3	89.4	59.2	21.4	6.9	6.8
Now married	1971	61.9	4.1	42.4	75.2	84.4	77.3	51.2
	1991	54.1	0.8	13.9	44.2	68.7	74.6	54.4
	1996	51.2	0.5	9.4	35.7	63.2	72.0	54.3
Separated	1971	2.4	0.2	1.4	2.6	3.2	3.2	2.6
	1991	2.8	0.1	0.9	2.5	4.1	3.2	1.9
	1996	3.0	0.1	0.7	2.4	4.4	3.6	2.0
Divorced	1971	1.2	0.0	0.4	1.2	1.8	1.6	0.8
	1991	6.0	0.0	0.5	2.9	9.3	8.3	3.2
	1996	7.2	0.1	0.4	2.6	10.2	11.5	4.4
Widowed	1971	6.2	0.1	0.2	0.4	1.6	8.9	34.7
	1991	6.5	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.9	7.1	33.0
	1996	6.4	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.8	6.1	32.5

Proportion of persons living in common-law unions, by age group, 1981 to 1996



Marriage a fragile bond for more people

Marriage appears to be a fragile bond for more and more individuals. One result was the continuation of the upward trend over the last 25 years in the number of lone-parent families.

At the time of the 1996 Census, there were over 1.6 million people who reported that they were divorced, a 28% increase from 1991. Women accounted for more than half of divorced individuals in 1996, since women do not remarry as often as men.

In 1996, 695,675 individuals reported that they were separated, up 15% from 1991. Again, more than half were women.

Almost 1.5 million people — four-fifths of them women — reported that they were widows or widowers at the time of the Census, up 6% from 1991. More than three quarters of them were 65 years and over.

Living alone: more than a third were seniors

About 2.6 million individuals, 12% of the population aged 15 and over, lived alone in 1996, up slightly from 11% in 1991 and 10% in 1986. The aging of the population was largely responsible for this increase.

Four out of ten individuals living alone were single, about the same proportion as in 1991. Divorced people represented almost one fifth (19%) of people living alone, up from 17% in 1991.

Seniors accounted for more than a third of people living alone, and most of them (71%) were widows. As seniors get older, their likelihood of living alone increases significantly. While 22% of persons aged 65 to 74 lived by themselves in 1996, the proportion grew to 37% for ages 75 to 84, and 48% for those aged 85 and over.

Women aged 65 and over were more than twice as likely to live alone as men. In large part, this is explained by the fact that women often outlive their spouses and, when widowed, live on their own.

Persons 15 years and over living alone by age group, 1996

Age group	Population		
	in private households	Living alone	% alone
Total: 15 years and over	22,506,430	2,622,180	11.7
15-24 years	3,825,455	121,060	3.2
25-44 years	9,282,765	860,645	9.3
45-54 years	3,681,505	367,155	10.0
55-64 years	2,464,450	339,645	13.8
65-74 years	2,012,240	451,680	22.4
75-84 years	1,020,620	376,670	36.9
85 years and over	219,400	105,325	48.0

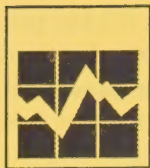
Note to readers

Census families are divided into those formed by couples and those headed by a lone parent. Married couples and common-law couples are considered families whether or not they have never-married sons or daughters living with them. Now-married and common-law couples together comprise husband-wife families.

A lone parent, of any marital status, living with one or more never-married sons or daughters, also constitutes a family.

Never-married sons and/or daughters are blood, step or adopted sons and daughters who have never married (regardless of age) and who are living with their parent(s). In this release, the terms "child" and "children" refer to these never-married sons and/or daughters living with their parent(s), regardless of age.

20% sample: The 20% sample universe of families in Canada, the provinces and territories includes families in private households in Canada and excludes families in collective dwellings, those in households outside Canada and all foreign and temporary residents.



IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP

HIGHLIGHTS

- Canada was home to about five million immigrants in 1996, a 14.5% increase since 1991. This increase was slightly more than three times the growth rate of the Canadian-born population. Immigrants represented 17.4 % of the population, the largest share in more than 50 years.
- Since the 1970's, increasing numbers of immigrants to Canada have come from Asia and the Middle East. Asian-born individuals accounted for more than half (57%) of the 1,039,000 immigrants who arrived between 1991 and 1996, up from 33% of immigrants who arrived in the 1970s.
- Four out of every 10 recent immigrants settled in the census metropolitan area of Toronto, and 60% of them were from Asia and the Middle East. Vancouver received 18% of all recent immigrants to Canada, 80% of whom were Asian-born.
- The majority of immigrants who settle in Canada obtain Canadian citizenship, usually within three to four years after immigrating to Canada.

New data from the Census showed that Canada was home to about five million immigrants in 1996, a 14.5% increase since 1991. This increase was slightly more than three times the growth rate (4%) of the Canadian-born population. Immigrants represented 17.4% of the population, the largest share in more than 50 years. This share had remained at around 15% to 16% between 1951 and 1991. The increase in the immigrant population reflects higher annual immigration levels during the 1990s.

The sources of immigration to Canada have changed greatly. The European-born continued to account for the largest proportion of all immigrants living in Canada in 1996. But for the first time this century they accounted for less than half of the total immigrant population, due to a growing influx from Asia and the Middle East.

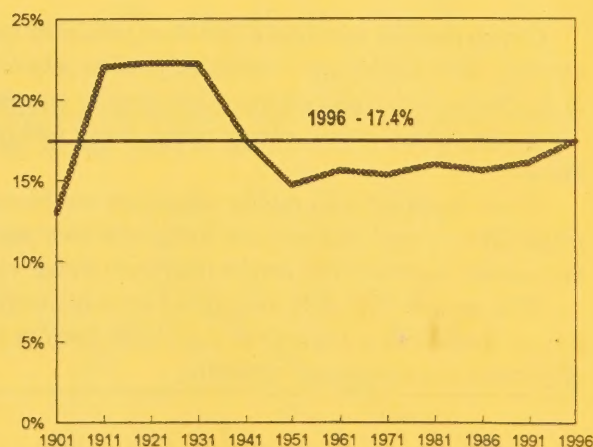
In 1981, 67% of all immigrants living in Canada were born in Europe. By 1996, this proportion had declined to 47%. In contrast, the share of Canada's immigrant population born in Asia and the Middle East increased from 14% in 1981 to 31% in 1996.

Recent immigrants: The majority from Asia and the Middle East

In 1996, just over one million persons in Canada (1,039,000) were immigrants who arrived between 1991 and 1996. The Asian-born accounted for more than half (57%) of these recent arrivals, up from 33% of immigrants who came in

the 1970s and 12% of those who arrived in the 1960s. Asian-born represented only 3% of those who arrived before 1961. (Throughout this release, the term "recent immigrants" refers to people who immigrated to Canada between 1991 and 1996.)

Immigrants as a percentage of Canada's population, 1901-1996

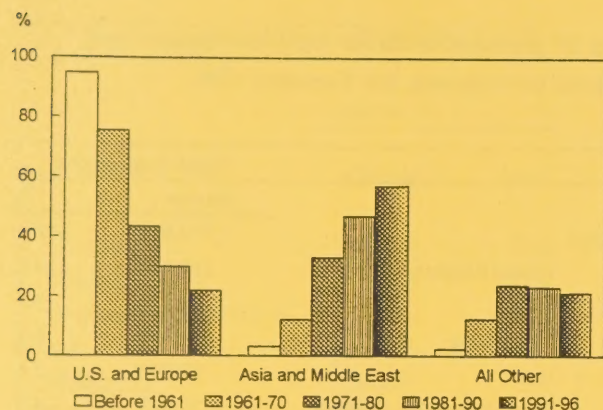


In contrast, the second largest group, those born in Europe, accounted for only 19% of all recent immigrants. They represented 90% of those who had immigrated before 1961.

The proportion of European-born has declined steadily in each subsequent wave of immigrants since 1961.

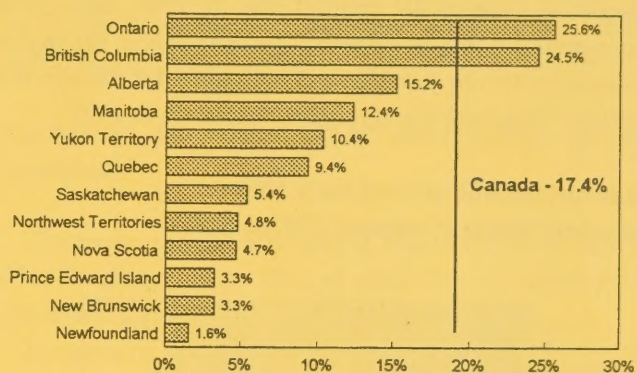
This trend toward increasing numbers from Asia and the Middle East becomes clear by comparing the leading places of birth for all immigrants in Canada with the top places of birth for those who arrived between 1991 and 1996.

Place of birth of immigrants by period of immigration, 1996



Asian countries accounted for seven out of the 10 most frequently reported countries of birth for recent immigrants. In contrast, eight of the top 10 countries of birth for those who immigrated to Canada before 1961 were European.

Immigrants as a percentage of provinces and territories, 1996



Note to readers

Immigrant population: refers to people who are, or have been at one time, landed immigrants in Canada. A landed immigrant is a person who has been granted the right to live in Canada permanently by immigration authorities. Some are recent arrivals, while others have resided in Canada for a number of years.

Recent immigrants: refers to people who immigrated to Canada between 1991 and 1996.

Asian-born: refers to people born in the Middle East as well as other parts of Asia.

Top 10 places of birth for total immigrants, and recent immigrants, 1996

	Total Immigrants			Recent Immigrants ¹	
	Number	%		Number	%
Total	4,971,070	100.0	Total	1,038,995	100.0
1. United Kingdom	655,540	13.2	1. Hong Kong	108,915	10.5
2. Italy	332,110	6.7	2. People's Republic of China	87,875	8.5
3. United States	244,695	4.9	3. India	71,335	6.9
4. Hong Kong	241,095	4.8	4. Philippines	71,325	6.9
5. India	235,930	4.7	5. Sri Lanka	44,235	4.3
6. People's Republic of China	231,055	4.6	6. Poland	36,965	3.6
7. Poland	193,375	3.9	7. Taiwan	32,140	3.1
8. Philippines	184,550	3.7	8. Viet Nam	32,060	3.1
9. Germany	181,650	3.7	9. United States	29,020	2.8
10. Portugal	158,820	3.2	10. United Kingdom	25,425	2.4

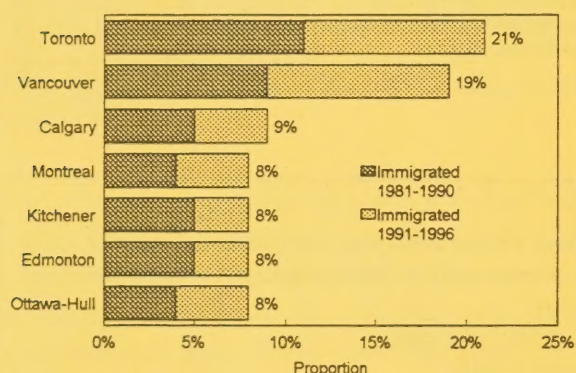
¹ Recent immigrants are those who immigrated between 1991 and the first four months of 1996

Ontario: immigrants made up over a quarter of its population

Nearly 563,000 recent immigrants settled in Ontario, giving it a total immigrant population of 2.7 million, more than half of the total in Canada. In fact, Ontario had attracted the largest share of recent immigrants (54%) compared with the other provinces and territories. In contrast, Ontario had just over one-third (37%) of Canada's total population.

Ontario's total immigrant population grew 15% since 1991, about the same as the national rate. In 1996, immigrants accounted for 26% of Ontario's total population, the largest proportion for any province and the highest for Ontario this century. This level was up slightly from 24% in 1991.

Immigrants who arrived since 1981 as a percentage of selected CMAs, 1996



Toronto: the largest immigrant population

The census metropolitan area of Toronto had 1.8 million immigrants in 1996, a 21% increase since 1991 compared with 5% for those born in Canada. In fact, Toronto had the largest immigrant population of all 25 census metropolitan areas in 1996. These individuals accounted for 42% of Toronto's population in 1996, up from 38% in 1991.

The Toronto census metropolitan area was the preferred destination of Canada's most recent immigrants. About 441,000, or 42% of all new arrivals to Canada, settled in Toronto, nearly three times its share of the total Canadian population (15%). This was the largest influx into any census metropolitan area. In comparison, 18% of recent immigrants to Canada settled in Vancouver, and 13% in Montreal.

Just over a fifth (21%) of Toronto's total population were immigrants who came to Canada since 1981. In fact, recent immigrants, those who arrived since 1991, represented one-tenth of Toronto's total population.

The sources of immigrants to Toronto have changed dramatically over time. Toronto's immigrant population who

arrived before 1961 was composed almost exclusively (92%) of people born in the United Kingdom and other European countries, such as Italy and Germany. Since the 1960s, the number of European-born immigrants living in Toronto has steadily decreased. European-born individuals represented just 17% of recent immigrants who settled in Toronto, with Poland as the most frequent European source.

Top 10 places of birth for total immigrants and recent immigrants, for Toronto, 1996

		Total Immigrants	
		Number	%
Total		1,772,905	100.0
1.	United Kingdom	158,070	8.9
2.	Italy	146,515	8.3
3.	Hong Kong	110,990	6.3
4.	India	99,930	5.6
5.	People's Republic of China	87,615	4.9
6.	Jamaica	86,910	4.9
7.	Portugal	82,105	4.6
8.	Philippines	80,860	4.6
9.	Poland	74,220	4.2
10.	Guyana	60,705	3.4

		Recent Immigrants ¹	
		Number	%
Total		441,035	100.0
1.	Hong Kong	48,535	11.0
2.	Sri Lanka	36,735	8.3
3.	People's Republic of China	35,330	8.0
4.	Philippines	33,210	7.5
5.	India	33,185	7.5
6.	Poland	18,605	4.2
7.	Jamaica	16,780	3.8
8.	Guyana	13,195	3.0
9.	Viet Nam	12,290	2.8
10.	Trinidad and Tobago	11,375	2.6

¹ Recent immigrants are those who immigrated between 1991 and the first four months of 1996

Toronto has become home to an increasing number of immigrants from Asia and the Middle East, as well as Central and South America, the Caribbean and Africa. Those born in Asia and the Middle East made up six out of 10 of all recent immigrants living in Toronto in 1996. Hong Kong, Sri Lanka and the People's Republic of China were the most frequent sources of these newcomers. In fact, Toronto had more recent

immigrants from Asia and the Middle East than did Vancouver. Individuals from Jamaica, Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago have added to the Toronto region's diversity.

Top 10 places of birth for total immigrants and recent immigrants, for Vancouver, 1996

	Total Immigrants	
	Number	%
Total	633,745	100.0
1. Hong Kong	86,215	13.6
2. United Kingdom	75,415	11.9
3. People's Republic of China	72,910	11.5
4. India	53,475	8.4
5. Philippines	34,640	5.5
6. Taiwan	29,330	4.6
7. United States	22,685	3.6
8. Germany	17,785	2.8
9. Viet Nam	17,000	2.7
10. Fiji	13,855	2.2

	Recent Immigrants ¹	
	Number	%
Total	189,660	100.0
1. Hong Kong	44,715	23.6
2. People's Republic of China	27,005	14.2
3. Taiwan	22,315	11.8
4. India	16,185	8.5
5. Philippines	13,610	7.2
6. South Korea	6,335	3.3
7. Iran	4,640	2.4
8. United Kingdom	4,040	2.1
9. Viet Nam	3,855	2.0
10. United States	3,640	1.9

¹ Recent Immigrants are those who immigrated between 1991 and the first four months of 1996.

British Columbia: highest increase in immigrants among provinces

In 1996, British Columbia had the second largest immigrant population after Ontario. It had 903,000 immigrants, a 25%

increase since the previous census, highest among the provinces. Almost 217,000, or 21% of all recent immigrants to Canada, chose to settle in British Columbia, a higher proportion than B.C.'s 13% share of Canada's total population.

Overall, immigrants accounted for 24% of B.C.'s total population in 1996, compared with 22% in 1991. Seven of every 10 immigrants in British Columbia lived in the census metropolitan area of Vancouver, compared with four in 10 of the province's Canadian-born population. About 88% of recent immigrants to British Columbia chose to live in Vancouver.

Vancouver: one out of every three people was an immigrant

The census metropolitan area of Vancouver had a total of 634,000 immigrants in 1996, of which 190,000 were recent immigrant.

Immigrants accounted for over a third (35%) of Vancouver's population in 1996, making it the census metropolitan area with the second largest immigrant population. Vancouver attracted 18% of all recent immigrants to Canada, three times higher than its share of Canada's total population (6%).

Nearly one-fifth (19%) of Vancouver's total population consisted of immigrants who came to Canada since 1981. Like Toronto, one-tenth of Vancouver's total population were recent immigrants.

The majority of Vancouver's recent immigrants were Asian-born. Four of every five newcomers to the census metropolitan area were from Asia and the Middle East, compared with less than 10% of those who came before 1961. The most frequent sources of recent immigration were Hong Kong, China and Taiwan, which accounted for half of all newcomers to Vancouver.

On the other hand, only 10% of recent immigrants to Vancouver were European-born, down substantially from 85% of those who immigrated before 1961.

Quebec: increase in the proportion of immigrants

In 1996, Quebec had 665,000 immigrants, a 12% increase since the previous census. In contrast, Quebec's population born in Canada grew at a much slower rate (3%).

Immigrants accounted for 9.4% of the province's total population in 1996, up from 8.7% in 1991. Throughout this century, immigrants have represented less than one-tenth of Quebec's population. The lowest proportion was recorded in the 1901 Census when 5.4% of Quebec's population was immigrant. The highest proportion was, in fact, the 1996 level.

The 151,000 recent immigrants who chose to settle in Quebec represented 15% of all recent immigrants who came to Canada. This proportion was lower than Quebec's 25% share of Canada's total population.

The attraction of a major urban centre for immigrants was perhaps most pronounced in Quebec. In 1996, 88% of Quebec's immigrants lived in Montreal, more than double the share of the provincial Canadian-born population. Similarly, about 90% of the 151,000 recent newcomers to Quebec also chose to live in Montreal.

Montreal: third largest immigrant population

Montreal had the third largest immigrant population (586,000) among all census metropolitan areas. Montreal's immigrant population increased 13% since 1991, more than twice the rate (5%) of its population born in Canada.

Proportionately, 18% of its total population was immigrant, only a slight increase from 1991, but this was still less than half of the corresponding proportion for Toronto (42%).

Overall, 13% of all recent immigrants to Canada chose to reside in Montreal. This was about the same as Montreal's share of Canada's total population.

The 135,000 recent immigrants who settled in Montreal made up 4% of its total population in 1996. Immigrants who arrived during the last 15 years made up 8%.

The countries of origin of Montreal's immigrants differed substantially from those of immigrants in Toronto or Vancouver, reflecting higher levels of immigration to Quebec from francophone nations such as Haiti. Almost 10,000 recent immigrants from Haiti have settled in Montreal, the highest level from any country. Lebanon was second with 9,610 recent immigrants, followed by France with 7,540.

Top 10 places of birth for total immigrants and recent immigrants, for Montreal, 1996

Total Immigrants			Recent Immigrants ¹		
	Number	%		Number	%
Total	586,470	100.0	Total	134,535	100.0
1. Italy	72,325	12.3	1. Haiti	9,995	7.4
2. Haiti	43,075	7.3	2. Lebanon	9,610	7.1
3. France	32,255	5.5	3. France	7,540	5.6
4. Lebanon	26,475	4.5	4. People's Republic of China	6,650	4.9
5. Greece	23,060	3.9	5. Romania	5,225	3.9
6. Viet Nam	21,920	3.7	6. Sri Lanka	4,675	3.5
7. Portugal	19,910	3.4	7. Philippines	4,640	3.4
8. United Kingdom	17,365	3.0	8. India	4,380	3.3
9. Poland	16,115	2.7	9. Viet Nam	4,135	3.1
10. United States	15,935	2.7	10. Morocco	3,820	2.8

¹ Recent Immigrants are those who immigrated between 1991 and the first four months of 1996

Canadian citizenship: its 50th anniversary

This year, 1997, marks the 50th anniversary of Canadian citizenship. Prior to 1947, people from Canada were legally classified as British subjects residing in Canada. Canadian citizenship was recognized with the passage of the first Canadian Citizenship Act in 1947. Since then, over 4.2 million people who have immigrated to Canada have become Canadian citizens, according to Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

The 1996 Census showed that 95% of Canada's total population were Canadian citizens. Of those, the vast majority (87%) were Canadian citizens by birth. The remaining 13% were naturalized citizens.

The majority of immigrants who settle in Canada obtain Canadian citizenship as soon as they are eligible, usually within three to four years after immigrating. Of all immigrants eligible to become Canadian citizens, 83% had done so by 1996.

